

PlainsTalk

News from the Missouri Basin & Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf Regions

Winter 2020/2021

ON THE JOB WITH THE MISSOURI BASIN DRILL CREW

Arkansas Valley Conduit
Project Breaks Ground

Missouri Basin
Photo Contest Winners

St. Mary Canal
Repairs Complete

508 Compliance:
Everyone's Job

Signing Ceremony Completes
Oakes Test Area Title Transfer



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION



Plains Talk
Winter 2020-2021

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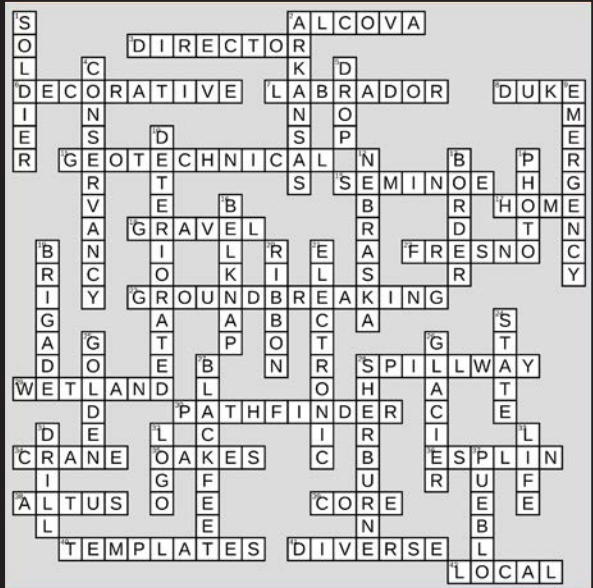
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Plains Talk encourages employee submissions, and assists with developing ideas. Questions about stories or photographic essays should be directed to the Plains Talk editor, at 406-247-7608.

Cover photo by Cody Kelly: Field Geologist Jake Lasater evaluates a concrete core sample and packages it for transportation to the onsite lab engineers for strength testing.

Background photo by Scott Cook: Jackson Lake Dam in Wyoming.

CROSSWORD ANSWER



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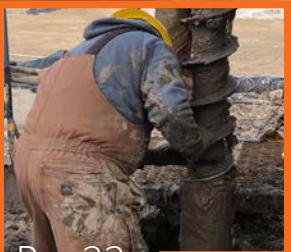
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Arkansas Valley Conduit

Groundbreaking

By Elizabeth Jones

Oct. 3, 2020 marked a monumental day for the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) when the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District (SECWCD), the Bureau of Reclamation, and Department of the Interior joined together at Pueblo Dam in Colorado to break ground for the construction of the AVC.

"From Reclamation, we promised that we would bring our resources, and our best expertise to this project - I made that commitment to senator Gardner two years ago," said Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman. "We have expanded access to public lands,

we have advanced America's energy independence and we have bolstered water projects across the west. Today we continue that legacy," said Burman.

Commissioner Burman, Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt, Colorado Conservation Board member Becky Mitchell, Colorado Senators Cory Gardner and Michael Bennet all joined Bill Long, president of the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District (SECWCD) to commemorate and discuss the project.

"I am here today to represent the 40 some



communities, water providers, residents of the lower valley who will greatly benefit from the construction of the AVC," said Bill Long.

"It was nearly 100 years ago in the 1930's that the residents of southeastern Colorado recognized that the water quality in the lower valley of the Arkansas River was quite poor," said Long. "The Fry-Ark project has delivered benefits that have far exceeded the expectations and vision in 1962," he said.

When complete, the conduit will connect 40 communities with a pipeline and spurs that

run from Pueblo to Lamar. The AVC will serve clean drinking water to about 50,000 people, produce jobs, and reduce the costs of pumping and treating groundwater.



"It is the local community's consistent, sometimes

dogged approach to help recognize their dream that leads to the moment like this – and sometimes it does take decades," said Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt. "At the end of the day, these projects tend to get done, but only with that sustained commitment by the communities - and in fairness, some fierce advocacy," said Bernhardt.

Reclamation and the District worked together to organize funding for the project that was authorized in 1962. Sixty years later, with funding now in place, construction of the AVC is planned to begin in 2022.



Bill Long, board president of Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District, displays a promotional gold fryingpan from the 1950s.



Original gold fryingpan, used to raise awareness and funds (see following page).



Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman with Reclamation flag.

Left to right: Brenda Burman, Commissioner, USBR; David Bernhardt, Secretary of the Interior; Cory Gardner, U.S. Senator; Bill Long, SECWCD Board President; Becky Mitchell, Colo. Water Conservation Board; Michael Bennet, U.S. Senator, Colorado.



A Golden Future

Fryingpan-Arkansas Project

By Chris Woodka, SECWCD



The golden fryingpans referenced on the previous page were sold up and down the Arkansas River basin by the Water Development Association of Colorado from the mid-1950s until the formation of the SE District in 1958. The purpose of the pan-handling (sorry I can't resist a fun pun) was to promote the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project and to raise money to send local backers of the Project to testify in Washington, D.C. The effort was featured in the March 14, 1955 edition of Life Magazine with some very interesting photos. The fryingpans represented the "golden future" of the Arkansas Valley.

Reclamation and partners expedite St. Mary Canal repairs, restore water supplies to Montana's Hi-Line

By Steve Darlinton, MTAO



On May 17, 2020, the last of a series of five concrete drop structures (Drop 5) failed on Reclamation's St. Mary Canal, located in northern Montana and within the Blackfoot Indian Reservation. No injuries occurred as a result of this failure, and canal flows were shut off. Drop 5 is approximately 250-ft long and is at the end of the 29-mile long canal. The structure is one of five drop structures that provide for an elevation decrease of over 200 feet before the water is discharged into the North Fork Milk River.

Reclamation assembled a joint technical team to assess the situation and determine the cause of the failure and recommend near and long-term repairs. The cause of the failure is believed to be the result of canal flows penetrating the concrete chute and causing erosion (voids) and buckling/collapsing of the concrete chute sections. The team identified two temporary solutions. However, upon evaluation these solutions may have only extended irrigation deliveries by six days if completed within optimistic schedules. In response the Milk River Joint Board of Control (MRJBOC) voted to not pursue temporary fixes and focus on immediately pursuing permanent repairs. Additionally, Drop 2 (upstream of Drop 5) was included since it was determined to be at high risk for failure and had previously been planned for replacement.



Project irrigation allotments were reduced by 50 percent to 1.0 AF/acre with the irrigation season ending in late July. The Fort Belknap Indian Irrigation Project continued to receive their full water right through the irrigation season as the senior water right holder in the Basin for natural flows. Municipal deliveries were maintained from Fresno Reservoir to the communities of Havre, Harlem and Chinook.

Reclamation determined the project to replace Drops 2 and 5 to be qualified Emergency Extraordinary Maintenance (EXM), allowing 35 percent of the total costs to be non-reimbursable in accordance with P.L. 111-11. Users are responsible for 73.96 percent of remaining 65 percent of costs for the project under current allocations.

With work progressing well to replace Drop 2 and 5 a decision was made to perform needed concrete repair work on Drop 1. Work began on this structure in mid-September and was completed parallel with the Drop 2 and 5 work.

The entire St. Mary Unit is located on the Blackfoot Tribe Reservation. Throughout the project Reclamation and the MRJBOC coordinated extensively with the Blackfoot Tribe for environmental and cultural compliance and Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO) employment.

(Continued)



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The project was a resounding success through the partnership and cooperation of Reclamation, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), MRJBOC and Blackfoot Tribe in conjunction with the engineering consultant, HDR, Inc., and the construction contractor, Sletten Construction Companies of Great Falls, Montana. Assistance from the U.S. State Department, the Department of Homeland Security and Border Patrol were extremely valuable in working with Canadian authorities to make arrangements for the timely delivery of construction materials such as ready-mix concrete, gravel, and rip-rap across the border.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on site on Oct. 15 and was highlighted by Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman giving the final speech. The importance of the project to Reclamation and all of Montana was evident by the speakers who were in attendance.

Montana's entire Congressional Delegation was on hand and gave speeches. Others that spoke included Montana DNRC Director John Tubbs, Lieutenant Governor and Co-Chair of the St. Mary's Rehabilitation Group Mike Cooney, and representatives from the Blackfoot and Fort Belknap Reservations. The ribbon cutting concluded with a toast from Wade Jones, President of the Milk River Joint Board of Control. "It's Christmas in October. It really is," Jones said.



Left to right: Milk-Marias Division Manager Toby Tabor; Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman; Reclamation Project Manager Steve Darlinton; St. Mary Unit Operator Thomas Gervais; Reclamation Missouri Basin Regional Director Brent Esplin; Reclamation Montana Area Manager Steve Davies.

St. Mary Canal Drop 2 Repairs



August 11, 2020



September 22, 2020



October 4, 2020

St. Mary Canal Drop 5 Repairs



May 17, 2020



August 11, 2020



August 26, 2020



September 6, 2020



September 22, 2020



October 5, 2020



2020

Photo Contest Winners

Every year, employees from the Missouri Basin and Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf Regions are invited to showcase their talent in the annual photo contest.

The Region's 2020 photo contest looked a little different than previous years because of the unique circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Any photo related to the Region's facilities, activities, people, scenery or wildlife were eligible, including images taken while teleworking!

Entering photos taken throughout the 9-state Region gives all employees an opportunity to see beautiful locations they might not be able to see otherwise.

This year's contest featured 101 eligible entries with 154 total votes cast. Third place was a tie between Cherri Lashley's photo of her Labrador dog cooling off at Red Willow Dam in Nebraska and Anna Hoag's photo of the view of North Fork Red River from Altus Dam in Oklahoma. Jeff Rieker

took second place with a photo of Green Mountain Dam and Power Plant in Colorado. Finally, drumroll please, first place went to Corbyn Coffelt for a scenic photo of the upstream end of Lake Sherburne Reservoir in Glacier National Park in Montana.

These images, as well as all entries, may show up in various Reclamation publications, websites, and other products.

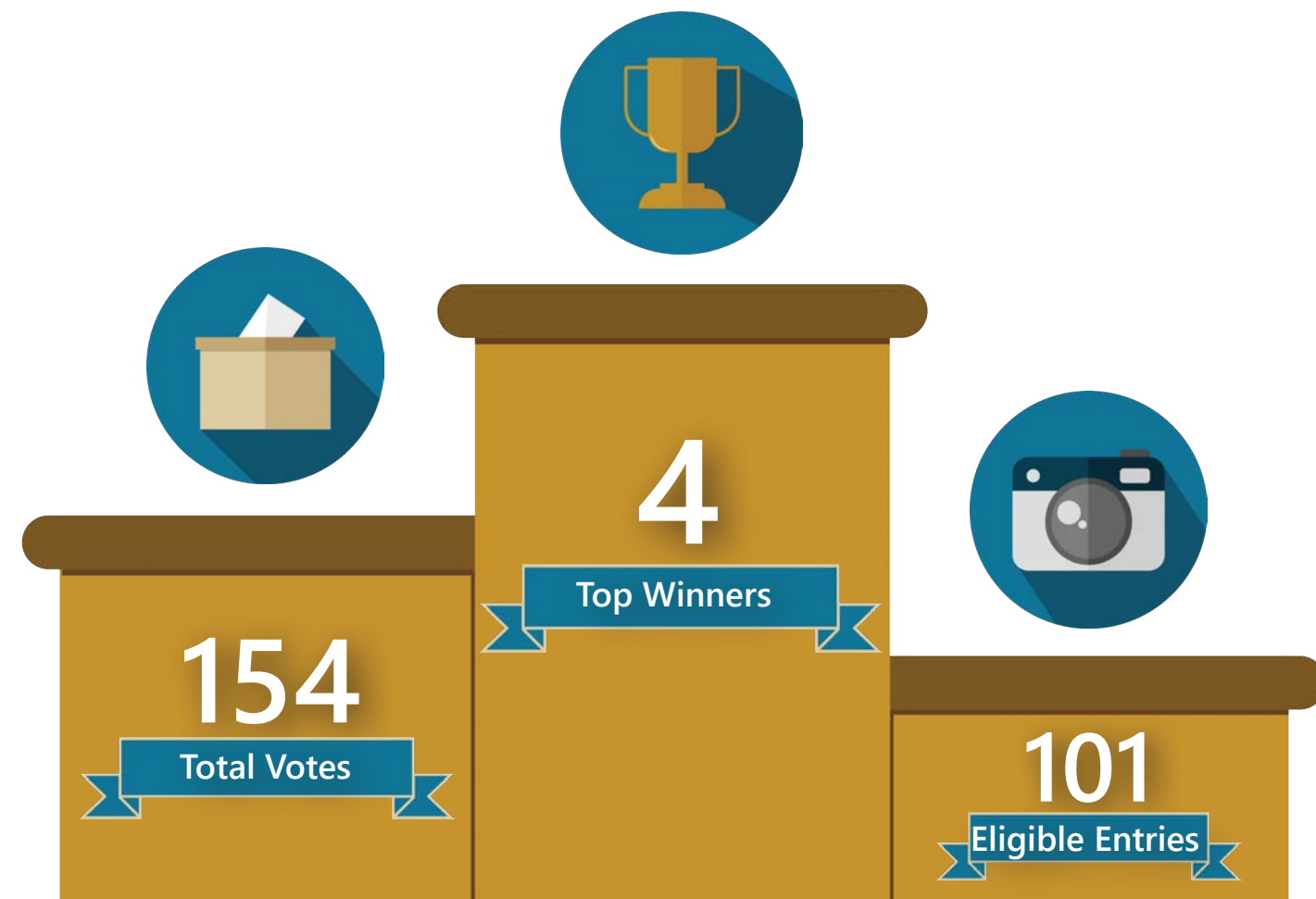


Photo by Cherri Lashley

An 8-month old Labrador dog, Quinn, cools off at Red Willow Dam in Nebraska on a hot summer night in July.

3rd

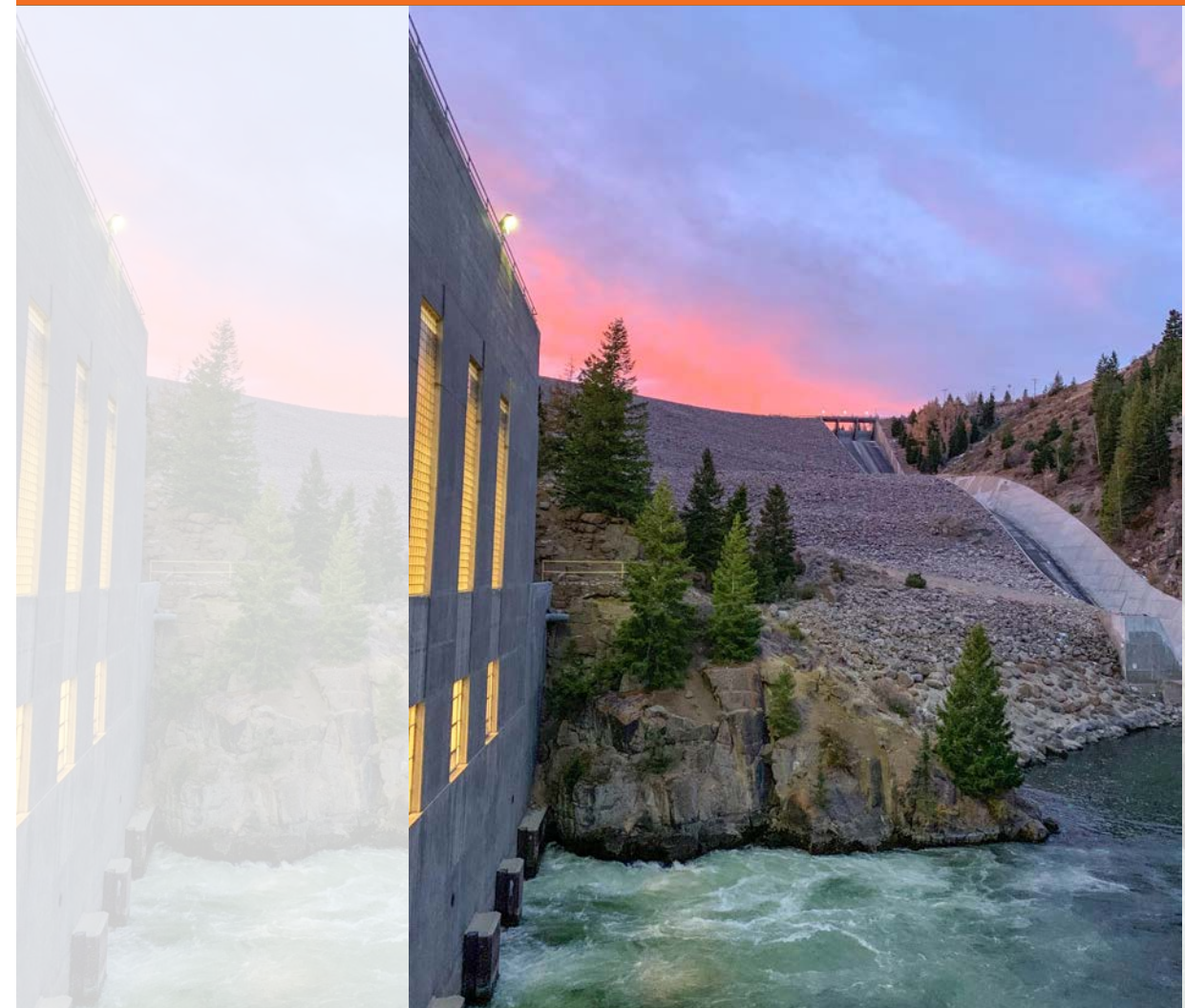
TIE!

Photo by Anna Hoag

A view of North Fork Red River from the top of Altus Dam in Oklahoma.



11



2nd

Photo by Jeff Rieker

A fall sunrise at Green Mountain Dam and Power Plant in Colorado.



1st

Photo by Corbyn Coffelt
The upstream end of Lake
Sherburne Reservoir in Glacier
National Park in Montana.

HONORABLE MENTIONS



Top Photo by Matt Wells

Repair work on Ft. Laramie Canal Tunnel No. 2

Bottom Photo by Taryn Preston

A kite surfer rides the waves at Canyon Ferry Reservoir in Montana

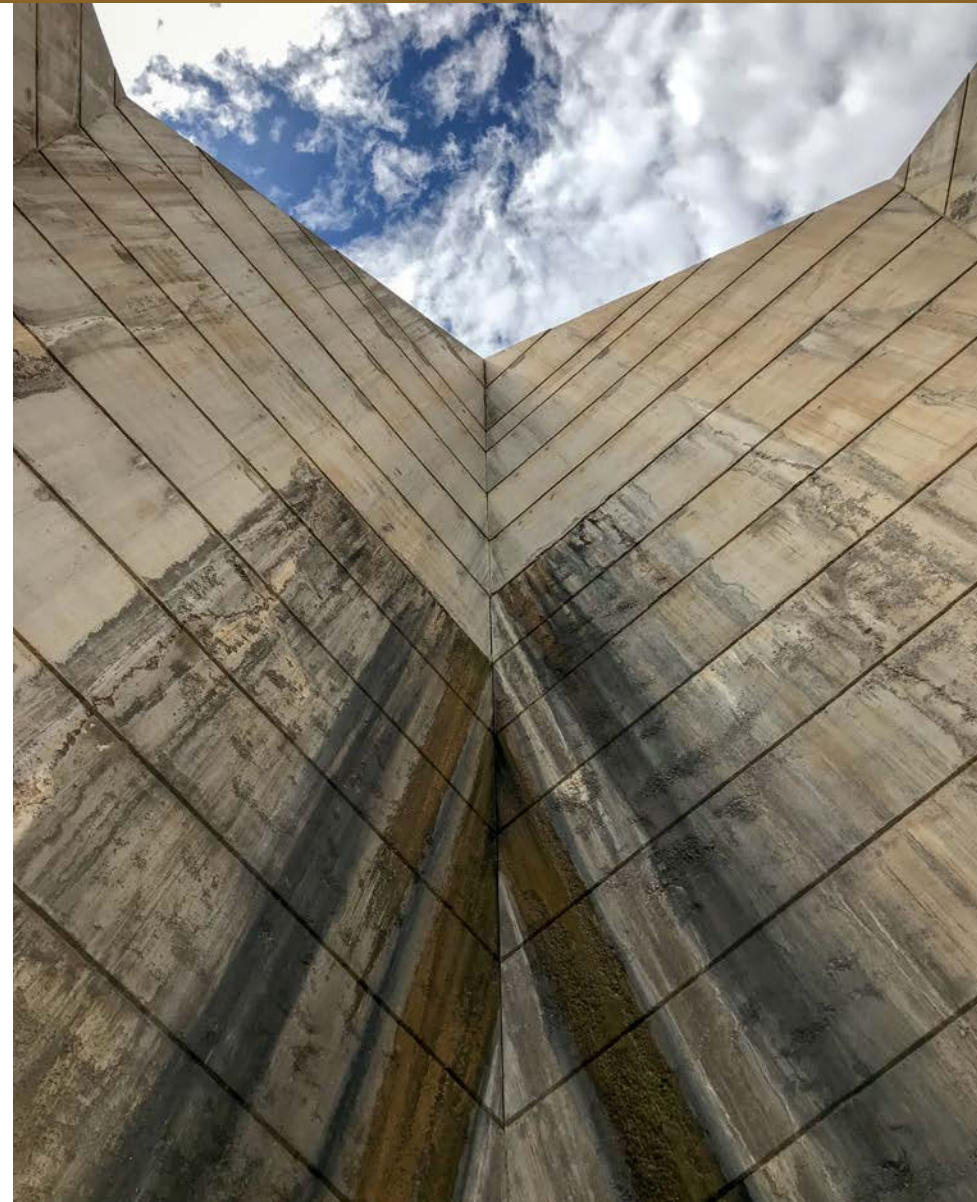


Photo by Jeff Rieker

Pueblo Dam points to the sky in Colorado



Top Photo by Oliver Lorenzo

Rope Access Technicians at the WC Austin Project in Oklahoma



Bottom Photo by Dave Marsh

Sunrise at Marys Lake in Colorado



Photo by Chris Hahn

Sunset Point, Montana

Oakes Test Area transfer complete

By Patience Mosbrucker, DKAO

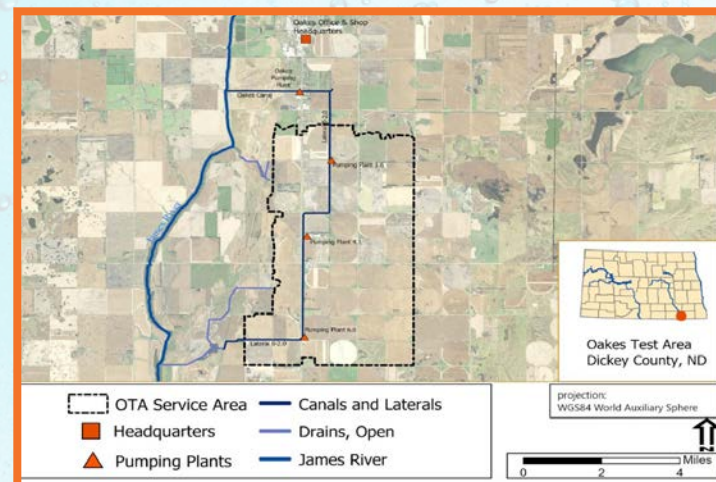
Department of the Interior Deputy Secretary Kate MacGregor joined U.S. Senator John Hoeven and other officials to finalize the transfer of the Oakes Test Area to local ownership. The action conveys full ownership to the Dickey-Sargent Irrigation District in Oakes, North Dakota, after the district paid for the Oakes Test Area facilities and lands.

"Local water decisions should be made locally," said Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman. "This title transfer is the result of cooperation between the federal government, water users and others so that our partners at Dickey-Sargent can control their own water future."

"Local water decisions should be made locally" - Brenda Burman

The Oakes Test Area was designed as a 5,000-acre prototype irrigation test area. It includes three pumping plants, a canal, pipelines, laterals, drainage system, wells, roads, an office building and several outbuildings. The Dickey-Sargent Irrigation District will now own and manage these facilities to meet current needs in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws under the terms of the title transfer agreement.

The Oakes Test Area title transfer aligns with the Department of the Interior's priorities to work with local water users to stimulate infrastructure investment through local ownership. This authorization saves money for the taxpayers and the federal government while enhancing facility use and increasing flexibility for the irrigation district.



Left to right: Dave Locken from the Dickey-Sargent Irrigation District, North Dakota Senator John Hoeven, and Deputy Secretary of the Interior Kate MacGregor pose after signing the Oakes Test Area title transfer documents.

North Loup wetland mitigation projects move forward

By Jeanette Timm, NKAO



Wetlands are considered the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems, serving as home to a wide range of plant and animal life and support a number of functions, including water purification, water storage, processing of carbon and other nutrients, and stabilization of shorelines.

As a result of their importance to the environment, wetlands are regulated under a multitude of laws and regulations. Wetlands that are impacted by construction activities must be mitigated, repaired, or replaced in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. When Nebraska-Kansas Area Office (NKAO) constructed the North Loup Projects in the 1990s, several wetlands were impacted. NKAO acquired over 500 acres of land along the Loup River in Central Nebraska to replace the wetlands impacted from the construction of Virginia Smith and Davis Creek Dams and their subsequent canals and laterals. Loup River is known to support habitat for the Federally-listed endangered and threatened species such as the whooping crane (*Grus americana*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*).

After acquisition, efforts were made on the properties to improve the wetland conditions in 1994. Working with guidelines from the Corps of Engineers, small ponds and ditches were constructed to retain water and enhance wetland characteristics. The properties were included in the management agreement

with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for administration under their wildlife program. Additional vegetation planting occurred over the years to enhance the habitat.

In 2018, Ducks Unlimited secured grant funding and was looking for partners to enhance wetlands. Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and NKAO were happy to provide access to 290 acres of Federal lands acquired for wetland mitigation. In addition, both agencies provided more funding to help ensure the success of the project.

The restoration design utilized the previous 1994 efforts by excavating the ponds and channels to serve as backwater habitat. Returning function to these backwater channels will benefit waterbirds, shorebirds, fish, amphibians and other wildlife species. Small pockets of vegetation were removed to open up the land. Post construction disturbed areas were planted with a high diversity native seed mixture to benefit wildlife and pollinator species.

Even with delays from the 2019 government shutdown and the 2019 spring flooding on Nebraska rivers, the project has already completed modifications on two of the three properties. The third property is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2021. The project areas will be monitored over the next several years.



ON THE JOB with the MISSOURI-BASIN DRILL CREW



By Cody Kelly, Geotechnical Drill Rig Operator

When most people think of drilling, they think of the oil and gas industry. But the work of the Missouri Basin drill crew is “geotechnical drilling” which involves drilling core samples for evaluation, but also much more. It’s an investigation process for everyone to gain insight about rock formations and how they react under certain conditions. This information is collected and evaluated by the entire Reclamation group, which in turn, provides critical data to contractors prior to breaking ground on Reclamation projects.

“The best laid plans begin with an over-prepared drill crew.”

The drill crew is a vital part of Reclamation’s mission, and their work is categorized as preconstruction design. They are tasked with determining what drilling equipment will return the best results, based upon specific requirements

of the project assigned. Without critical data gathered and collected by the drill crew, the end result could lead to catastrophic failure and uncertainty in ground stability. The best laid plans begin with an over-prepared drill crew.

The MB drill crew focuses on creating a safe work environment and quality assurance in every drilling program they are assigned to. The high level of attention to detail provides the engineers with the confidence they need to design remedies for Reclamation’s aging water structures. This results in a superior outcome for contractors and safety of the general public.

A day or two in the life of a drill crew operator is one that will leave people wondering “Are these people even normal?” You will then begin to realize that their main purpose is to make the impossible a reality. Every day in the field presents new challenges with great reward.

Cody Kelly on the worksite at Seminole Dam.

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The Geotechnical drilling program is studying the concrete in Seminoe Dam, Wyoming.

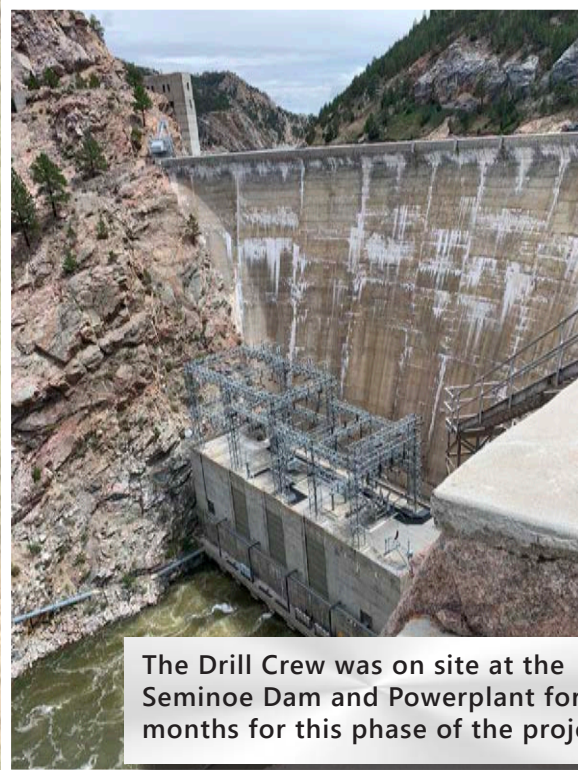
A Technical Services Center (TSC) Field Exploration Request, dated April 4th, 2020, requested the services of the Drill Crew to evaluate the existing monitoring program and enhance the program as needed to obtain better estimation of deformations due to the concrete expansion from alkali-silica reaction (ASR) and to perform a seismic structural analysis of Seminoe Dam using Reclamation's state-of-practice and reassess risks.



A typical load out and what type and how much equipment is needed daily. The LF70 skid drill rig is needed to do the drilling at Seminoe Dam due to the weight restrictions on the crest of the dam.



This drill tooling is required to obtain concrete cores. It takes a lot of skill, knowledge, and experience for the Drill Crew to do their job.



The Drill Crew was on site at the Seminoe Dam and Powerplant for two months for this phase of the project.



This core sample shows the condition of the concrete several feet below the surface. The geologist will document its condition, then it will be transported for further testing.

The drill rig can be seen in place on the crest of Seminoe Dam.

It might seem like an easy task to just "get a sample" but in reality it's a complicated process requiring special skills and equipment.

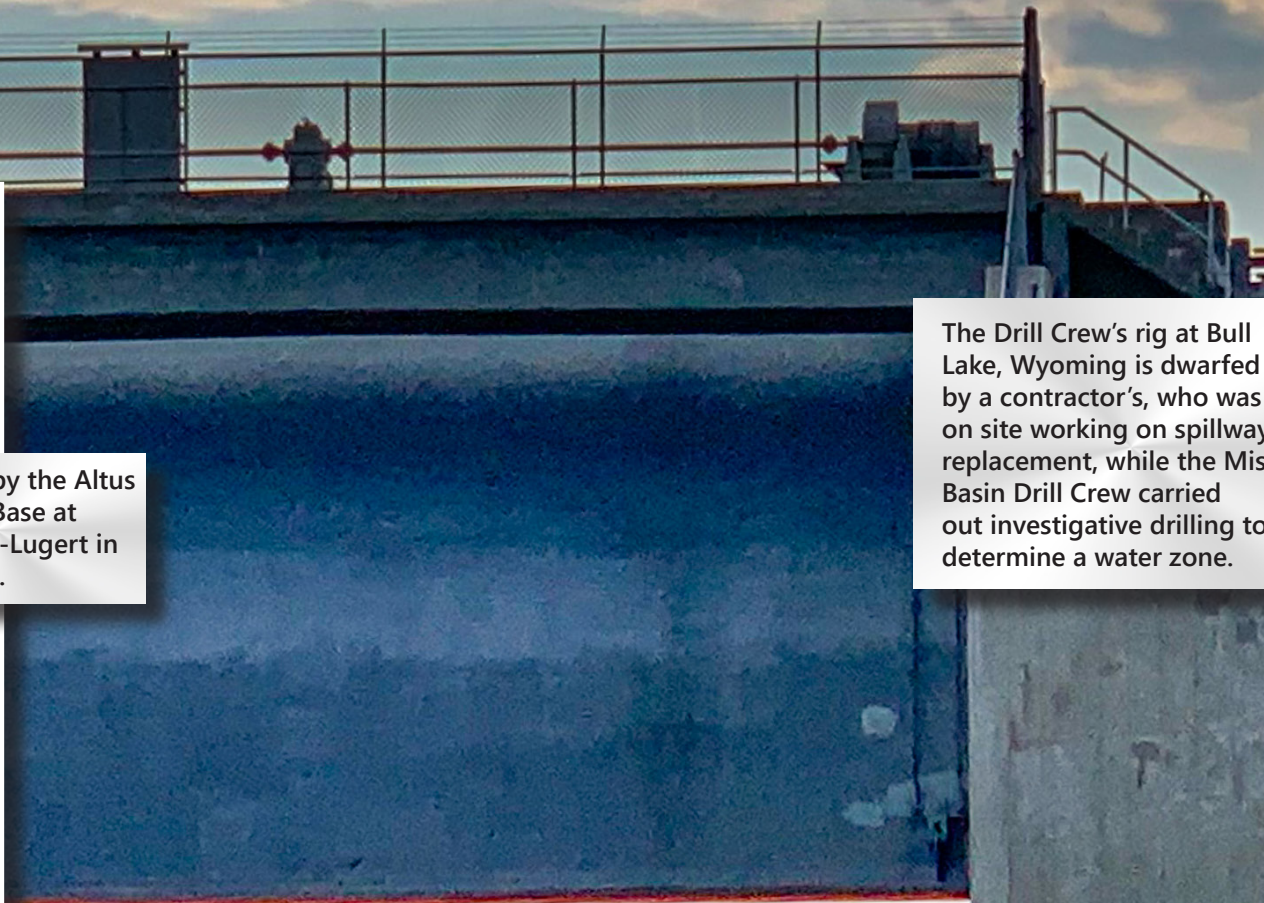




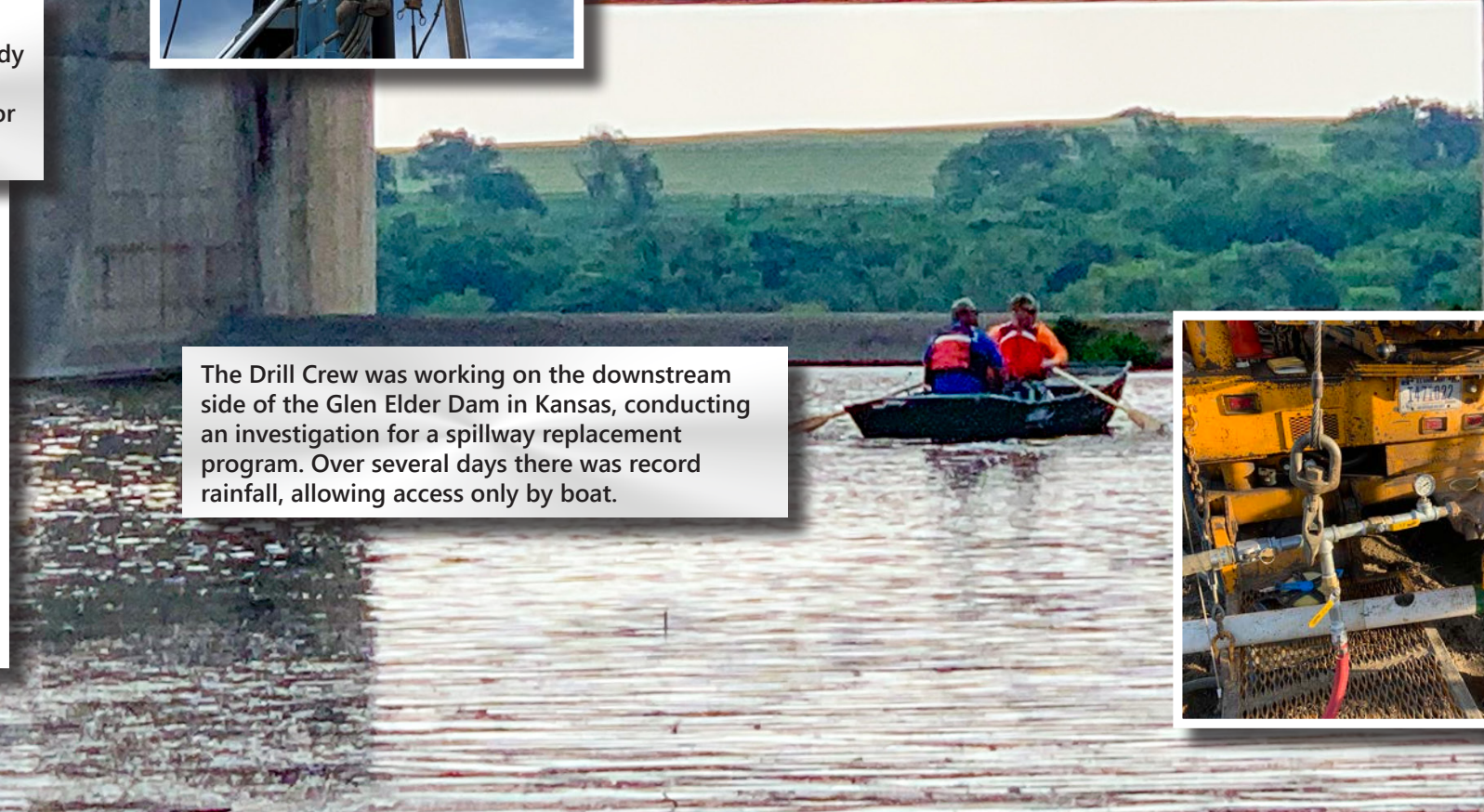
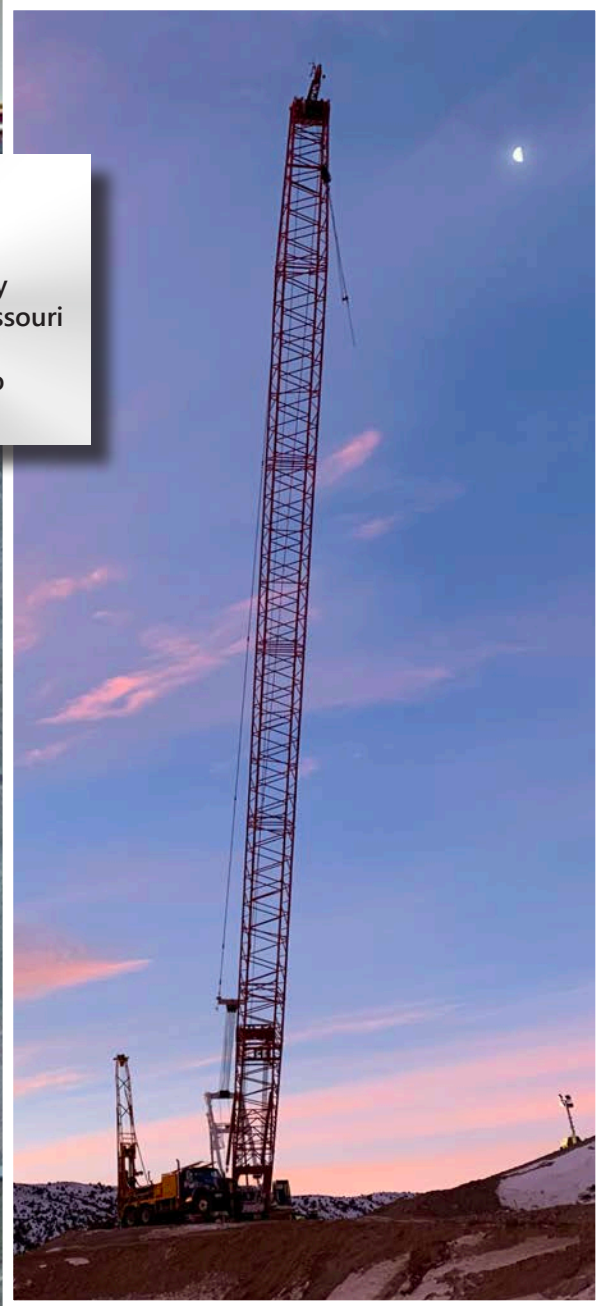
Difficult conditions and weather, such as a muddy mess or cold and snow are all in a day's work for the Drill Crew.



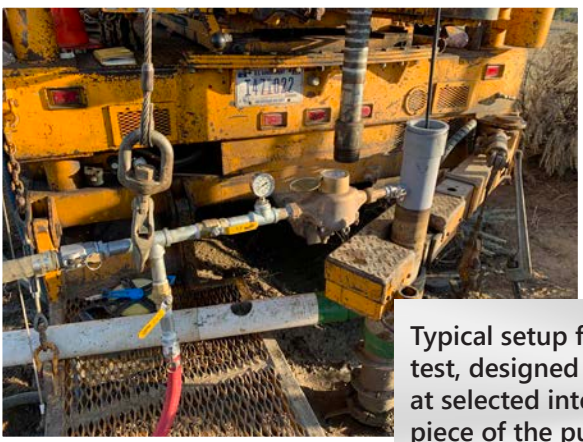
A flyover by the Altus Air Force Base at Lake Altus-Lugert in Oklahoma.



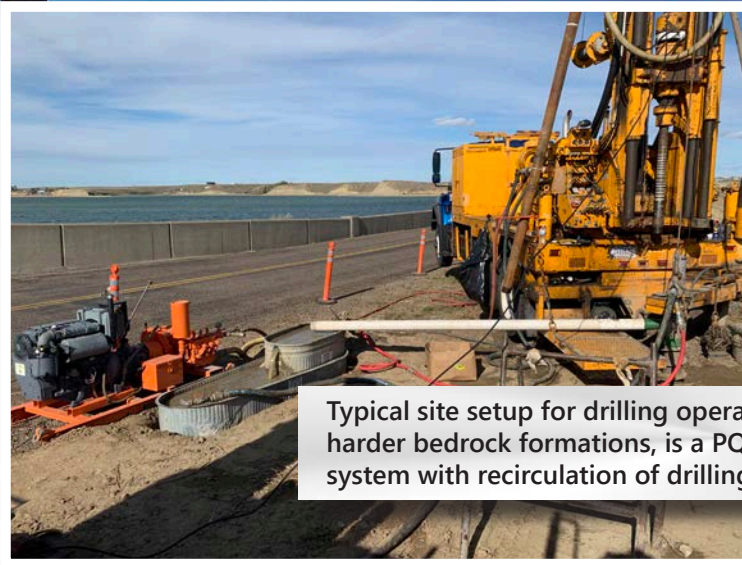
The Drill Crew's rig at Bull Lake, Wyoming is dwarfed by a contractor's, who was on site working on spillway replacement, while the Missouri Basin Drill Crew carried out investigative drilling to determine a water zone.



The Drill Crew was working on the downstream side of the Glen Elder Dam in Kansas, conducting an investigation for a spillway replacement program. Over several days there was record rainfall, allowing access only by boat.



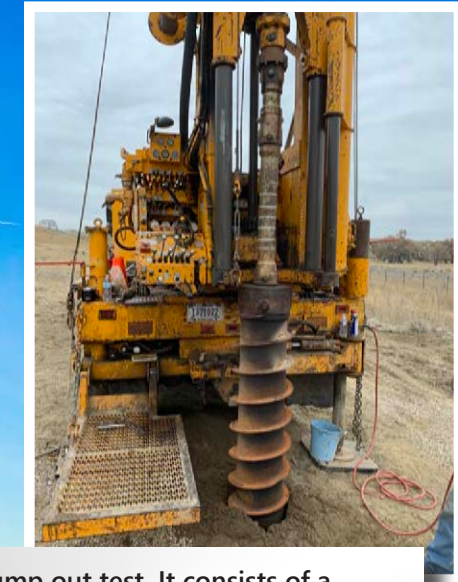
Typical setup for a single packer down staged permeability test, designed to test the water permeability of formations at selected intervals with various pressures. This is a valuable piece of the puzzle for engineers to determine how much water is moving in and around the abutment of the dam.



Typical site setup for drilling operations. This setup, which is used for harder bedrock formations, is a PQ3 wireline diamond core drilling system with recirculation of drilling fluids.



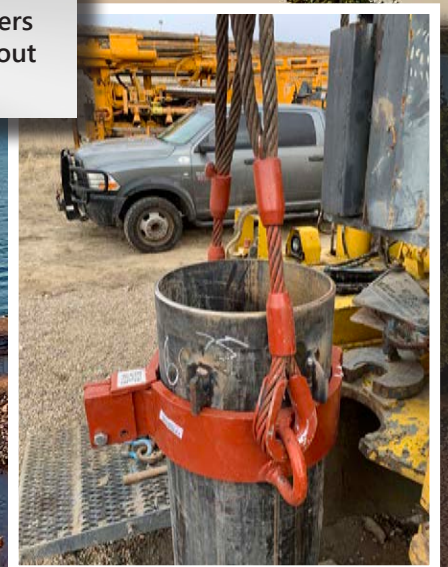
A crew member welds a 16 inch casing for a pump well. This well was used to determine hydrogeologic properties of the dam site, allowing the engineers to determine what it will take to safely excavate the downhill side of the dam.



Typical setup for a pump out test. It consists of a submersible pump flowing at a constant rate. There are 8-10 surrounding wells with instrumentation recording the effects the pump rate is having on the surrounding drawdown of the aquifer. The engineers use this information to design a successful pump out program prior to construction.

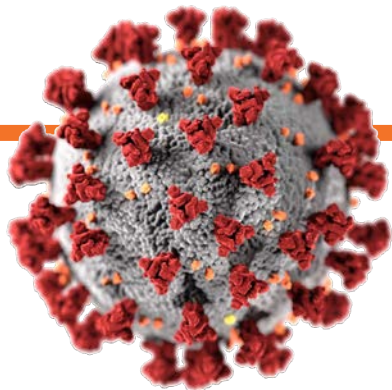
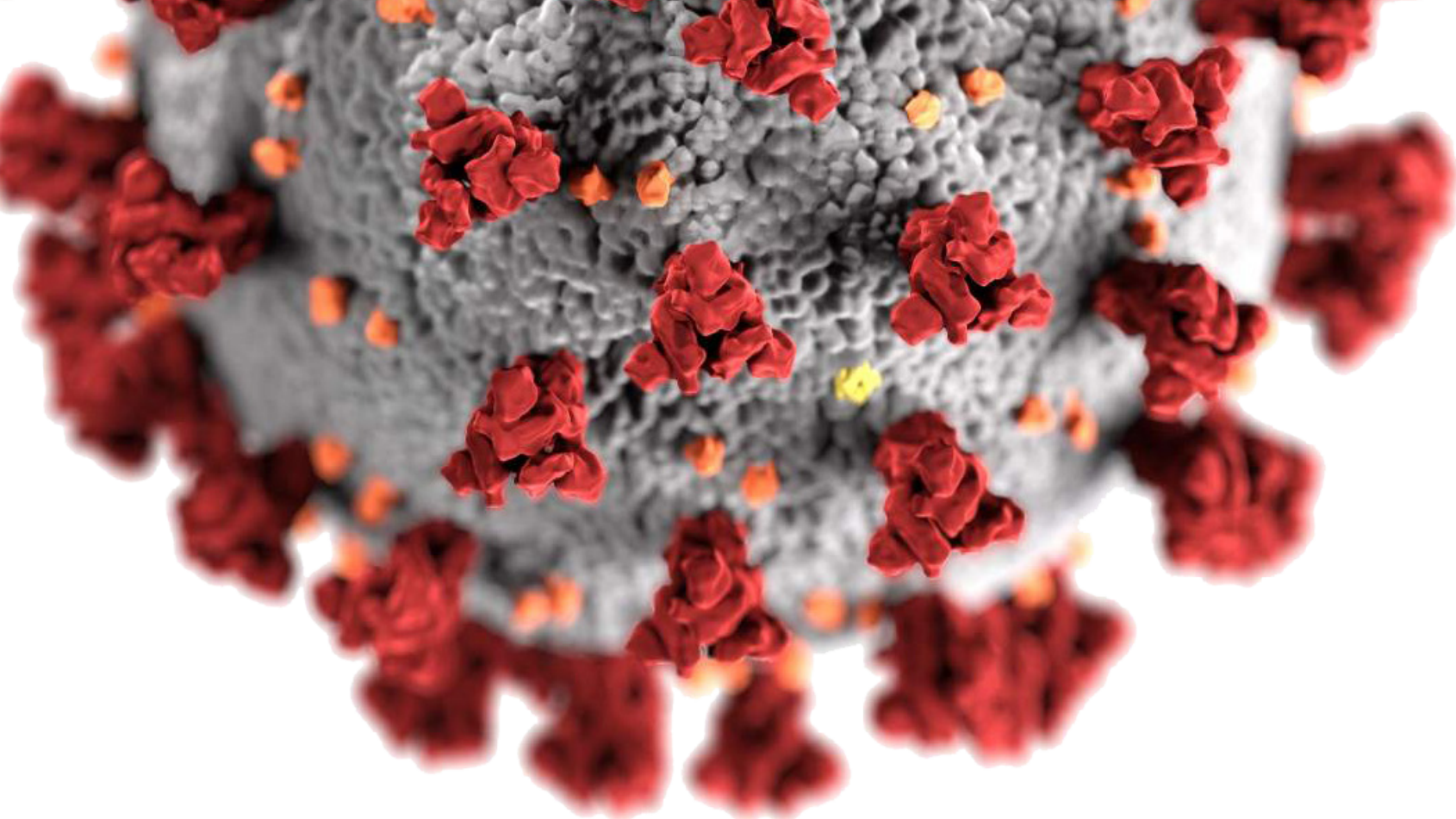


Crew members prepare casing for the pump out well. Left, Cody Kelly (Drill Rig Operator) bevels the casing. Right, Pete Shawver (Drill Rig Helper) prepares the casing for welding. Weld down casing is quite normal for drilling of pump wells, but this set-up was unique to the drill crew. With the help of vendors, Kelly created a caisson type drill tooling, resulting in a less intrusive way to drill around our dam sites.

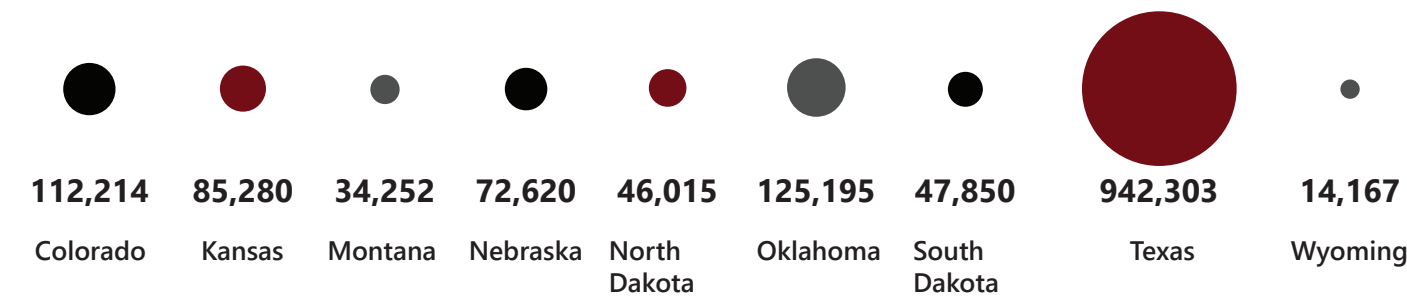


Sunset at Lake Altus-Lugert in Oklahoma.





CONFIRMED CASES IN THE MB STATES



* Data is current as of Nov. 2, 2020 from the Johns Hopkins University of Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center

CORONAVIRUS WINTER UPDATE

By Brittany Jones

The Coronavirus continues to threaten global health and safety through the end of 2020.

Confirmed cases surged again in the fall months throughout America and has reached rural communities that were only minimally affected during the early months of the pandemic.

According to the Johns Hopkins University of Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center, the United States reported 7,916,099 confirmed cases of COVID-19, resulting in 216,872 deaths by Oct. 15, 2020.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, infectious disease expert, warns the coronavirus, which is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person transmission, may worsen during the winter months, and that America may not return to business as usual until late 2021. As of mid-October 2020, the United States experienced an upward trend of new COVID-19 cases, averaging more than 40,000 new cases every day.

Reclamation reported 52 confirmed cases, and zero fatalities amongst its employees as of Oct. 14, 2020. The total number of confirmed

cases within the nine states that encompass the Missouri Basin and Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Regions topped 1.2 million by October 2020, resulting in an associated 22,765 deaths.

"We must remain vigilant in monitoring ourselves for symptoms, especially through the upcoming winter months," Gary Barsness, Region Safety and Occupational Health Manager said. "We are seeing another uptick in cases, and Reclamation's first priority remains the health and wellness of employees."

Reclamation continues to overcome obstacles and celebrate successes despite challenging times.

Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt and Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the long-awaited Arkansas Valley Conduit in southeastern Colorado, Oct. 3, 2020.

Upon completion, the major infrastructure project will convey clean water from Pueblo Reservoir via miles of pipelines to 40 communities and a projected future population of 50,000 people.

"The Arkansas Valley Conduit will provide a reliable long-term water supply to communities relying on groundwater contaminated by naturally occurring toxins.

Reclamation is proud to provide a source of safe and clean water to promote health, welfare, and economic opportunity for these Americans," said Commissioner Burman.

To read the full article about the AVC Groundbreaking Ceremony, turn to page 2.

After a structural failure due to aging infrastructure on the St. Mary Canal May 17, 2020, Reclamation and partners celebrated the completion of repairs during a ceremony Oct. 15, 2020 in northern Montana.

Because of the failure, the Milk River was reduced to natural flow only which caused a premature end to the local agricultural irrigation season and forced water restrictions for some communities in Canada for most of the summer.

Through hard work, coordination, and perseverance from multiple agencies, water supplies were restored to 120,000 acres in eight irrigation districts and municipal water for 18,000 people.

To read the full article about the St. Mary Canal Repairs Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, turn to page 6.

Reclamation completed the transfer of federal water facilities to local ownership in North Dakota, Oct. 15, 2020.

The Oakes Test Area was designed as a 5,000-acre prototype irrigation test area. It includes three pumping plants, a canal, pipelines, laterals, drainage system, wells, roads, an office building and several outbuildings. The Dickey-Sargent Irrigation District will now own and

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manage these facilities to meet current needs in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws under the terms of the title transfer agreement.

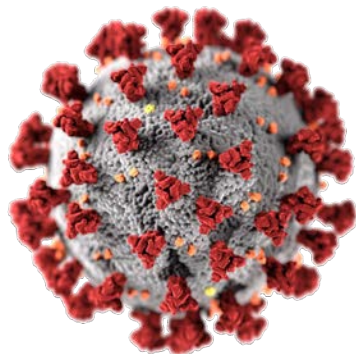
The Oakes Test Area title transfer aligns with the Department of the Interior's priorities to work with local water users to stimulate infrastructure investment through local ownership.

“Our people are the backbone of Reclamation, and no physical asset is more important than the health and well-being of our team...” - Brent Esplin

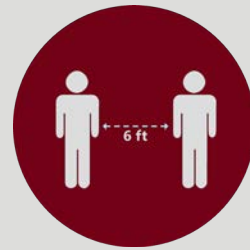
This authorization saves money for the taxpayers and the federal government while enhancing facility use and increasing flexibility for the irrigation district.

To read the full article about the Oakes Test Area title transfer, turn to page 16.

“Our people are the backbone of Reclamation, and no physical asset is more important than the health and well-being of our team,” said Regional Director Brent Esplin. “I am so proud of the essential work we accomplished to provide water and power supplies to Americans across the western states while overcoming unusual hurdles. Thank you for your continued service to Reclamation’s mission.”



**Avoid infected people,
avoid touching your face**



**Keep 6 ft away from
others**



Wash your hands often



**Wear a face mask in
public spaces**



**Clean and disinfect
frequently touched
surfaces**



**Be alert for symptoms,
stay at home if you are
sick**

Alcova Reservoir lowered additional 29 feet for spillway repairs

By Public Affairs Staff

“Completion of this project is important in order to ensure the continued reliability of the spillway structure.” - Carlie Ronca

Alcova Reservoir was temporarily lowered to elevation 5,459 feet which is 29 feet below the normal winter operating elevation of 5,488 feet to accommodate essential repairs to the Alcova Dam spillway. The reservoir, located near Casper, Wyoming, was lowered at an average rate of about 15 inches per day during the month of October. In a normal year, the reservoir is lowered about 5 inches per day for a total of 10 feet.

“Completion of this project is important in order to ensure the continued reliability of the spillway structure,” said Wyoming Area Manager, Carlie Ronca. “It includes replacing deteriorated concrete

on the downstream spillway and stilling basin retaining walls, retaining wall caps, and floor slabs in designated areas. Additionally, it will replace downstream spillway and stilling basin handrails and chain-link fence.”

The rapid decline of the reservoir’s water level caused bank slumping in some locations, resulting in dangerous conditions and impassable areas. Leaders at the Wyoming Area Office urged members of the public to avoid the dangerous shoreline areas at Alcova Reservoir through the end of 2020.

Reclamation plans to refill Alcova Reservoir to normal winter

operating elevation during the last two weeks of December. This will result in temporary higher than normal releases through the Miracle Mile and Pathfinder Dam, and minor declines in reservoir levels in Seminoe and Pathfinder Reservoirs. By Jan. 1, 2021, Alcova Reservoir will be restored to its normal winter operating range.

The spillway and stilling basin work is scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2021.



Missouri Basin Welcomes New Regional Director and Assistant Regional Directors

By Elizabeth Jones



Brent C Esplin is the regional director for the Missouri Basin (Interior Region 5) and Arkansas-Rio Grande Texas Gulf (Interior Region 6), which collectively are the largest and most ecologically diverse regions in Reclamation. Esplin began this position June 21, 2020. He provides leadership for the management, development and protection of water and related resources across nine states.

Esplin has more than 20 years of service with the Bureau of Reclamation, most recently serving as Upper Colorado Basin Regional Director; prior to that position he served as Deputy Regional Director for the Upper Colorado Basin. He also served as Area Manager for Reclamation's Montana Area Office in Billings, Montana; Deputy Area Manager for the Phoenix Area Office in Arizona; and Deputy Area Manager for the Nebraska-Kansas Area Office in McCook, Nebraska.

His years of experience include successfully addressing complex water supply and hydropower production issues; working with endangered species recovery programs; implementing American Indian water rights settlements; overseeing important facility construction, upgrades and safety of dam improvements; and collaborating on key river compact issues across multiple western river systems.

Esplin first joined Reclamation in 1997 as a civil engineer in the Montana Area Office. A native of Smithfield, Utah, Esplin holds a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering and a Master of Science degree in civil engineering, both from Utah State University.



Brent Esplin
Regional Director

Marlon Duke brings almost 17 years of experience across a variety of federal and private sector organizations. Prior to coming to the Missouri Basin and Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas-Gulf Region, he served for more than four years as Public Affairs Officer for Reclamation's Upper Colorado Basin Region. In that role, he oversaw outreach, engagement and communication for the region's 82 projects and dams, and 31 hydroelectric powerplants across all or parts of six states. He also served a long-term detail as Reclamation's Chief of Public Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Before joining Reclamation, Duke served as Director of Communication for the Transportation Security Administration's Office of Human Capital in Arlington, Virginia, where he built an all-new organization to provide active engagement with the agency's nearly 50,000 employees. Before that, he worked at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he served

as Strategic Planning Director for the service's acquisition organization and led communication and legislative affairs for its \$30 billion recapitalization program.

Prior to entering federal service, Duke worked for General Dynamics Information Technology, Inc. and Policy Impact Communications, Inc., both in Washington, D.C.

Duke holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Utah and an associate's degree from Dixie State University in Utah. He is also a graduate from the U.S. Department of Defense Executive Leader Development Program. Duke grew up in Utah and Hawaii.



Marlon Duke
Assistant Regional Director

Brian Hollis has been with Reclamation for over 21 years and began his career as a Supervisory Civil Engineer Program student in 1999. Most recently he has been serving as a Supervisory Civil Engineer/Resident Engineer for the Construction Engineering Group for the Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region facilitating construction for the Cle Elum Dam Fish Passage project.

Prior to the CPN Region, Hollis also served as a Construction Liaison at the Technical Service Center for four years specializing in Dam Safety projects, rewind and turbine overhauls, concrete, and coating construction projects. He has also served as the Regional Construction

Engineer for the Missouri Basin (formerly Great Plains) Region and served as the on-site COR/RE for several Dam Safety construction projects throughout the Region.

Hollis was raised in northwest Montana in the Flathead Valley and attended Montana State University – Northern in Havre, Montana where he earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in Design Drafting, then attended Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Hollis is a registered Professional Engineer, licensed in Montana.



Brian Hollis
Assistant Regional Director

508

COMPLIANCE

Are your electronic documents 508 Compliant?

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended in 1998 requires all electronic documents developed, procured, maintained or used by federal government agencies to meet Section 508 compliance standards. 508 compliance ensures people with disabilities have comparable access to and use of electronic documents to that of a person without a disability. Comparable access can be checked and achieved through software applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint or Adobe Acrobat.

Department of the Interior policy states that the creator of the document is responsible for ensuring it meets 508 compliance before it is distributed or published. 508 Compliance may seem like a daunting task to those who are unfamiliar with the basic processes. But with a little training and familiarity, complying with the Rehabilitation Act and making electronic document accessible for our coworkers and stakeholders with disabilities becomes an easier task to manage.

Need training or more assistance with compliance?

For 508 Compliance training and resources visit usbr.gov/main/accessibility.html

For additional help to make documents 508 compliant, Reclamation has a contract in place that covers the creation and remediation of PDF files. Visit https://teamssp.bor.doi.net/printanddup/Pages/508_Compliance.aspx for more information.

Tips for Microsoft Word and Excel

- Use a default accessible template when creating a new document
- Include alternative text for all graphics and photos inserted into the document
- Right click the image and select "Edit Alt Text"
- Generate a 1-2 sentence description of the image
- If the image is for decorative purposes, such as a colored line to separate information, click the box that says "Mark as decorative"

Select the language of the document so screen readers can read the document with ease

- Click File
- Click Options
- Click Language
- Select English
- Click OK

Use default document structuring and style features such as headings, tables, lists, numbering, and titles

Tables require logical layouts and should read from left to right, and top to bottom

- Label all row headers and column headers

Heading levels must be used in chronological order to be compliant

- For example, Heading 1 should be used first on the page, followed by Heading 2, and so on

Use textual annotations (bold, italics, font size) to convey important information instead of color Check accessibility and correct errors before saving documents

- Click review
- Select "Check Accessibility" icon
- Review inspection results and remediate as necessary

Tips for Adobe PDF

Conduct an accessibility check and remediate errors

- Click on Tools Tab
- Scroll down to find and click Accessibility
- Click Full Check, Click Start Checking
- Remediate errors before saving

After an accessibility check, common errors include:

- **Missing document title**
 - Expand Document issues
 - Right click on Title, click Fix
 - Enter title of document, click OK
- **Language of document not set**
 - Right click on Primary Language
 - Click fix
 - Select English, Click OK
- **Untagged annotations**
 - Click on Tags panel
 - Click on options icon
 - Click Find
 - Select unmarked annotations in the dropdown menu
 - Click Search Document
 - Click Find
 - Click Tag Element for each unmarked annotation
 - Select Annotation from the dropdown menu when a new tag box pop ups
 - Click OK

- **Missing alt text on images**
 - Expand Alternate Text issues
 - Expand figures alternate text
 - Right click failed figure, Click fix
 - Insert description of image or click decorative figure
 - Click the next arrow to fix additional missing alternate text
 - Click Save & Close button

- **Appropriate nesting issues with headings**
 - Expand Headings issues
 - Expand Appropriate nesting
 - Right click on failed element
 - Select "Show in Tags panel"
 - Reorder headings numerically
 - Continue as needed until all headings are in descending order for each page (H1-H6 are available heading level options)

- **Incorrectly labeled Headers within tables**
 - Expand Tables issues, Expand Headers
 - Right click on failed element
 - Select "Show in tags panel"
 - Expand selected table
 - Every table row <TR> must have a table header <TH>
 - Expand each <TR> and double click on the first <TD> to change it to <TH> instead

Remember, 508 compliance is required and is the responsibility of the office which creates the document. Contact the Missouri Basin Public Affairs Office for additional resources.



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

FIRE

BRIGADE



Jerico Stevens, Jay D. Roller, and Armand Bird, members of the Yellowtail Fire Brigade responded to a 200-acre fire on private land near Yellowtail Dam in Montana, Aug. 21, 2020. Jason Buskeness also provided support from the station.

Big Horn County resources also responded to the fire and used water from Yellowtail Reservoir to help extinguish the flames.

The efforts of the Yellowtail Fire Brigade members helped control the fire and save personal property.

Photos by Mike Byrnes,
Yellowtail Division Manager

VISUAL



Quick Tips

IDENTITY

The Visual Identity web page has logos, templates and guidance
<https://intranet.usbr.gov/vip>

Templates

The "All Items Alphabetically" link will show all templates that are available.

These templates will have the logo inserted and font styles applied.

If there is not a template for your specific need, you can use your best judgment laying out your project, following the guidance posted on the Visual Identity site.

Make sure you continue using the approved fonts and colors listed on the VIP if creating a new document.

Logo Files

The VIP page has approved logos available for download.

For most uses you will want to use the PNG files. PNG, or Portable Network Graphics files are universally compatible and should work with any program you use.

There are Adobe Illustrator (AI) files available as well. These are vector graphics, which means they can be resized to any dimension without losing quality. You will probably only need to use these files to send to vendors who create products with the Reclamation logo.

Logo Use

The shield portion of the logo should never be reproduced less than 1 inch high.

You can use the vertical or horizontal logo.

You can use the logo shield by itself, without the wording, if appropriate. However, do not use the verbiage from the logo on its own.

When re-sizing the logo, make sure to preserve the aspect ratio and not stretch the logo in either direction.

For questions or further guidance, please contact the Public Affairs Office at 406-247-7608.

CROSSWORD

2 Reservoir temporarily lowered 29 feet below its normal winter elevation

3 The Missouri Basin and Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf Regions has a new Regional one

6 Type of figures that don't require alternative text according to 508 compliance rules

7 Dog featured in one of the Photo Contest winning images

8 This college, which has won 5 NCAA Men's Division I College Basketball Championships, shares a name with one of the new Assistant Regional Directors

11 Drilling required to obtain core samples for evaluation

15 The drill team is studying concrete at this dam in Wyoming

17 It's where the heart is, but also where you should stay if you're feeling sick

18 One of the construction materials required for repairs to the St. Mary Canal

22 Municipal water deliveries were maintained from this Reservoir after the St. Mary Canal drop structure failure

23 This type of ceremony was held for the AVC

28 Repairs to this feature at Alcova Reservoir are scheduled to be completed by March

29 The most biologically diverse type of ecosystem

30 Expect temporary higher releases through the Miracle Mile and this dam in Wyoming this winter

34 The scientific name of this threatened species is *Grus americana*

35 Test Area recently transferred from federal to local ownership

36 He began his new position as MB & ART's Regional Director in June 2020 after more than 20 years of service with Reclamation

38 You can find a great view of the North Fork Red River from the top of this dam in Oklahoma

39 The cover photo features Jake Lasater evaluating this type of concrete sample

40 You can find these on the VIP website

41 The MB & ART Regions are the largest and most ecologically _____ regions within Reclamation

42 Brenda Burman, Reclamation Commissioner said "_____ water decisions should be made locally."

1 Work on the _____ Canyon Dam is featured on the back cover

2 The AVC project won't deliver any water to this state

4 One of the "Cs" in SECWCD

5 Two of these types of structures on the St. Mary Canal were repaired and replaced over the summer

9 Repairs for the St. Mary Canal qualified for this type of extraordinary maintenance

10 Replacing concrete in this condition is critical to ensure the continued reliability of the spillway at Alcova

12 You can find the Loup River in this state

13 Construction deliveries for the St. Mary Canal had to cross this between the U.S. and Canada

14 This contest produced 4 top winners in 2020

16 This Indian Irrigation project continued receiving their full water rights through irrigation season after the St. Mary Canal structure collapse

19 Members of the Yellowtail Fire _____ responded to a fire in August

20 Something cut during a ceremony

21 Documents that must be made accessible for people with disabilities

24 U.S. department that worked with Canadian authorities to arrange timely deliveries of construction supplies for St. Mary Canal repairs

25 Odd color for a frying pan

26 This year's 1st place photograph features scenic landscape from this national park

27 The Drop 5 structure of the St. Mary Canal is located entirely within this Indian Reservation

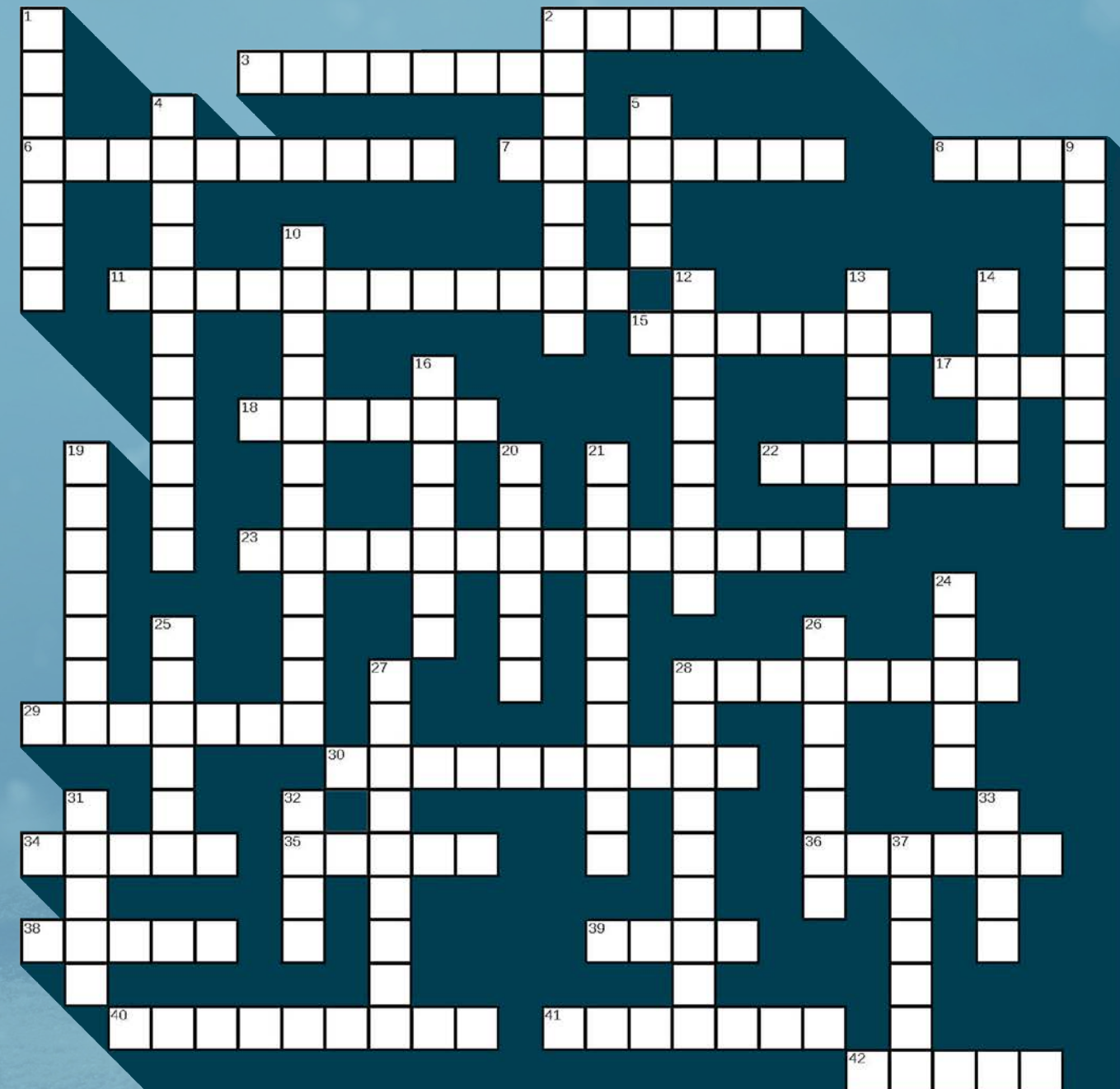
28 Lake _____ Reservoir is featured in this year's 1st place photo

31 Vital to Reclamation's mission, this crew is categorized as preconstruction design

32 This should never be reproduced less than 1 inch in height

33 Magazine that featured interesting photos of frying pans in 1955

37 Water from this reservoir will be delivered to a future population of 50K people in southeastern Colorado upon the completion of the AVC project



ACROSS

DOWN

All answers can be found in this issue.
Complete puzzle solution is on the inside front cover.

Back in Reclamation history

Work in progress on the
Horsetooth Reservoir
Soldier Canyon Dam
outlet tunnel in 1947

